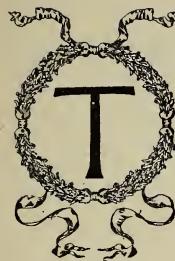


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HISTORIC MOMENTS: THE NOMINATION OF LINCOLN.

By Isaac H. Bromley.



HE Chicago Convention of 1860 was much more than an organized body of delegates; its work much more than that of nominating candidates. Its transactions overshadowed in importance, outreached in consequences, and transcended in results those of any assembly of men that was ever gathered on this continent. I shall not stop to answer the reader's rising thought of Philadelphia and 1776. Difference in perspective creates illusions that may be left to time to dispel. May 18, 1860, was the turning-point of time, and this Convention the very pivot upon which swung—what? Some question of form of government, method of administration, burden of taxation, right of representation, or of the occupancy of several hundred or thousand offices? No, these are but trivialities. On that pivot swung vastly more than the ambition of a party, the hopes of a people or the welfare of a continent. All mankind—the whole human race, everywhere—had a stake upon it. Civilization and barbarism were coming to a grapple, and upon the turning of events here—as everyone now sees, though no one guessed it then—it depended whether the "irrepressible conflict" should be fought to a finish and civilization should march on over the dead form of barbarism that had offered it battle, or be only a tournament display carried on with courtesies and diplomacies, to end with compromises and awards and new lease of life to the savagery which flaunted itself before the world, affronting the intelligence and shocking the moral sense of mankind. The Chicago Convention, without knowing it, was selecting the leader for a long war. And without knowing it, in that inscrutable fashion in which God makes mockery of all our logical pro-

cesses, it was selecting out of all the world His chosen instrument. It almost takes one's breath away to think what would have happened had Mr. Seward, to whom the logic of events most strongly pointed, or any other of the twelve candidates voted for in the Convention, been nominated. Imagine the dislocation in history that would have resulted had Essex, Fairfax, or Manchester, each of whom, according to all human reasoning, had superior claims, stood in Cromwell's shoes, or had Charles Lee or John Hancock been preferred to Washington.

The background or stage-setting of the Convention was an array of political conditions never known before or since. They were unique, phenomenal. Out of political chaos kindred elements were coming together, finding each other, settling into orderly arrangement, taking form, crystallizing. The slavery question had been "finally" settled in 1850. The Whig Party tried hard to believe it, and choked itself to death in the effort in 1852. In 1854 Mr. Douglas had reopened the question in order to make the "finality" more final, and had split the Democratic Party wide asunder. In the disintegration which followed, two or three new parties had arisen which did not contain separately the quality of cohesion, or the promise of permanence. These elements began coalescing in 1856. The process was reaching its conclusion here.

The Second Republican National Convention met at Chicago on May 16, 1860. Not since the foundation of the Government had the political outlook been so threatening to the stability of the Union and the continuance of peace. Congress had been five months in session, two of which had been entirely occupied with the Speakership contest, and the rest spent in wordy wrangling

that frequently came perilously near to blows on the floor of the House in open session. For the Southern Democrats, who had come up to Washington in a white heat of passion over John Brown and Harper's Ferry, were fuller than ever of bluster and bravado, and the North had begun to send men to Congress who talked back and could not be bullied. Threats of disunion punctuated all the debates, and not infrequently there were personal collisions that set the country all agog with rumors of impending duels; though "the Code" was getting a little out of fashion since Burlingame's selection of Canada as the place and rifles as weapons, in answering Preston Brooks's challenge, reduced the latter to the absurdity of refusing to go to Canada because he would be exposed to personal violence on his way through the North. But Pryor, of Virginia, had challenged Potter, of Wisconsin, only recently, and the latter had convulsed the whole North with a broad guffaw by accepting, and selecting bowie-knives as the weapons—at which point that matter ended. This was fresh in memory. One of the sights at the Tremont House was a bowie-knife, seven feet long, suitably inscribed, which the Missouri delegation had brought with them to present to Potter. It may be noted in passing that while the country was girding itself for the bloody business of a death grapple with slavery, as a preliminary it made short work of its twin relic of barbarism by simply laughing it out of court. Burlingame and Potter pulled off its lion skin and revealed its ears with a *reductio ad*. Since then in this country a challenge is a bray only.

The first elections of the Presidential year had taken place in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The Democrats had made a desperate fight in Connecticut, the narrow margin by which their opponents had carried it for seven years encouraging them to believe that with Thomas H. Seymour, their most popular man, as candidate for Governor, they could break the line of the almost solid North. Had they succeeded, the South would have taken new heart and hope; there would have been no breaking up of the party at Charles-

ton, and the war might have been postponed. No State election was ever watched with such interest in all parts of the country, none ever more strenuously contested. It was the key-note of the Presidential year. Then originated the "Wide-Awake" associations which in the National campaign blazed out over all the North with a semi-military organization that attracted thousands of young men, who thus, without knowing it, were preparing themselves for the much more serious work ahead, when they should change torches for muskets. Connecticut was lost to the Democrats, and the South thereon determined that it had no longer any use for the Democratic Party. The National Convention of the party at Charleston had spent the last week of April in noisy contention and fruitless balloting, and at the end of it fallen asunder, one wing adjourning to meet at Richmond on the 11th, the other to meet at Baltimore on the 18th of June. Meantime the fragments of the Old Whig Party, uniting with the Southern wing of the American or Know-Nothing Party, had held a Convention at Baltimore on the 9th of May, under the name of the Constitutional Union Party, at which they nominated John Bell, of Tennessee, for President, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, for Vice-President, after adopting a platform of one resolution, in which, in the same determined spirit with which Mrs. Partington went against the Atlantic Ocean with a broom, they pledged themselves to maintain the Constitution and the Union, and frown down sectional parties. It was a Convention that knew it was respectable, and could not understand how, being so respectable, it could be ridiculous.

With the Democratic Party hopelessly disrupted, and the whole trend of affairs in the Free States toward a union of all the elements of opposition to that party, it was not strange that the delegates came together at Chicago in high spirits and with a confident feeling that the nominee of the Convention would be the next President of the United States. No one looked farther than that. The fixed purpose of the party was to bring Kansas into the Union as

a Free State, and set definite bounds to the institution of slavery. That was all. It did not enter into the dream of the most radical opponents of the institution to interfere with it where it already existed. If anyone had said that within the next Presidential term slavery would be abolished, and the slaves made free citizens, he would have been listened to very much as one would who predicted that the Mississippi would presently run north. Simply to restrict the institution to existing limits seemed easy enough; and though threats of secession were louder and more general than ever in the South, it was the belief of most people at the North that it was only bluster and that nothing would come of it. What these delegates saw, then, was a Presidency within easy reach and the usual acquiescence of the defeated party in the result. They were not free from selfish ambitions nor unfamiliar with the arts by which these ambitions are promoted. They were altogether human; and whoever believes, on account of what followed their work, that they were saints or even unselfish philanthropists, that they pursued no devout ways, resorted to no intrigues, and drove no sharp bargains, makes a mistake.

The Convention met in an enormous building with a capacity capable of holding ten or twelve thousand people; a barn-like structure, made of rough timber, decorated so completely with flags, banners, bunting, etc., that when filled it seemed a gorgeous pavilion aflame with color and all aflutter with pennants and streamers. It was the first of its kind, and itself something of a wonder. The stage proper was of sufficient capacity to hold all the delegates, who were seated on either side of a slightly elevated dais occupied by the presiding officer, the secretaries being just in front, and beyond them, occupying the space to the edge of the platform, the representatives of the press. The parquette below was occupied by alternates and holders of special tickets distributed by the delegates. The galleries were reserved for ladies accompanied by gentlemen, and the miscellaneous public to the number of four or

five thousand stood in the aisles and all the available unoccupied space. The peculiarity of this arrangement, it will be seen, was in its breaking the Convention proper in two, and seating it on each side, instead of in front of the presiding officer. The advantage of it was that the Convention was staged so that the delegates could be seen from all parts of the auditorium and none of the proceedings lost by the audience. Something of convenience was sacrificed to dramatic effect. The Convention was just then "the greatest show on earth."

It was indeed a grand spectacle. When Governor E. D. Morgan, of New York, as Chairman of the Republican National Committee, called the Convention to order, he faced the largest audience that had ever assembled within doors in the country. Governor Morgan was not an impressive speaker. He read from manuscript the few sentences with which he formally opened the proceedings in a rather perfunctory way; but he was regarded with interest as the Governor of New York, and as representative of the successful merchants and wealthy men of business who had laid aside their timid conservatism and put themselves heart, soul, and purse—the last not being least important—into the new movement against slavery extension and slave-holding domination. During these preliminaries there were the ordinary hand-clapping and applause with which large assemblages amuse themselves and hold impatience in check. The naming of David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, for temporary Chairman induced a general outburst of enthusiasm—for David Wilmot, by the accident of having offered an amendment to a bill appropriating money for the purchase of territory from Mexico in 1846, which provided that slavery should be forever prohibited in the purchased territory, had been famous in all the years of slavery agitation since that time as the author of the "Wilmot Proviso," which was long the rallying-point of the opponents of slavery extension. No man in the Convention was better known by name than he. The commonplace speech with which he took the chair was well received by the good-natured

audience, who by this time had perceived that by a piece of good luck the acoustic properties of the Wigwam were excellent, so that the speakers could be heard without difficulty in every part of it.

Then followed the humdrum of organization, the calling off the names already agreed upon for the several committees by the various State delegations, during which the vast hive was in a buzz and flutter and the galleries occupied themselves with finding and pointing out the men of note on the platform. Considering the greatness of these transactions, and their epoch-marking character, it is almost a disappointment, in recalling the scene, to find that there were so few men of great fame in sight. The great soldiers who, a few years later, made their names immortal, were unknown; they were in the egg on which this Convention sat and unconsciously cackled. A man in uniform on that stage would have been viewed curiously, for our people had then no idea that military trappings were for anything but show. A year later it is not improbable that from a quarter to a half of the male citizens in the Wigwam were in military uniforms, with a thorough realization that they meant a great deal more than show.

Sitting by my side at the same table was a newspaper editor, who called me "Ike," as I called him "Joe." He was running over with enthusiasm. When the nomination was made he interrupted himself in his hurrahing to say to me, who looked on in wide-eyed silence, "Why don't you hurrah?" I don't know why I did not; but I remember that I felt queer and only said, "I can't hurrah; I should cry if anyone touched me." I came nearer crying when, in less than twelve months, I saw him in uniform at the head of the first Connecticut company that answered the call for troops. He was afterward a Brigadier-General, Governor of his State, and Member of Congress, and has lately been elected to his third term as United States Senator. There were probably other similar cases. It was Joe Hawley who sat at my elbow.

I have said that our people at that

time had little notion that military paraphernalia was for anything but show, or that marching movements or exercises in the manual of arms signified anything more than symmetry and prettiness in certain mechanical operations by groups or masses of men. The circumstance is recalled that on one of the evenings of Convention week there was an exhibition drill in the Wigwam of an organization called the Chicago Zouaves. It was more an athletic club with military organization, drill, and discipline, than an ordinary militia regiment. Its picturesque uniform, which has since become familiar, was then so novel and unusual as to constitute in itself an attractive feature, while the remarkable acrobatic performances, of which the drill largely consisted, and the rapidity and precision with which they were executed by the whole regiment, as if by one man, lent to the exhibition all the charm of the circus of the period. It might have been remarked that, pretty as it all looked, it was not all prettiness, but that every step of it, though a dancing-master's, meant business. Very few did remark it until later. The colonel was a young lawyer named Ellsworth. The Chicago people thought very well of him, because of his talent for organization, and the ability he had shown in perfecting this pretty machine. They had no idea, though, that he had done it for any but show purposes, or that he was an earnest person engaged in serious work. In one year and six days from the day of the Convention's adjournment he lay dead in his uniform at Alexandria, Va., one of the first who fell in the war, having earned, with an undying fame, the everlasting gratitude of his country for the single-hearted service he gave her, and the inspiration of a heroic example.

It was a thick curtain that hung before the Chicago Convention of 1860. Behind it were preparing the most bewildering transformations that ever dazzled the eyes of mortal man.

But though the heroes of the war were not there in uniform, there were, in the various groups upon the platform several figures of national prominence—targets for the galleries' index-fingers. It seems to me, as I recall it,

that Horace Greeley was the most conspicuous, as he was certainly the most picturesque, figure on the platform. He did not need pointing out. Everybody in the audience seemed to know him at sight. The most frequent exclamation was, "There's old Greeley," with no disrespect, but only a rough fondness in the adjective. He was full of business. The New York delegation was for Seward to a man. And for him absolutely, unreservedly—first, last, and all the time, without any second choice. To them Mr. Seward seemed the central figure of the whole movement, its prophet, priest, and oracle. Not even Henry Clay before him, or Grant or Blaine after, had such a following of blind idolaters. They had worked themselves up into the belief that the new political party would collapse if it did not take the highest ground of principle, and choose as its leader the foremost anti-slavery statesman in the country; the man who had described the relations between freedom and slavery as an "irrepressible conflict" between two opposing and enduring forces, and whom they fondly called "Old Irrepressible." Without him it would be the play without Hamlet. They were vociferous, aggressive, boisterous, and they had brought with them from New York outsiders and workers and brass bands who filled the streets with processions and the nights with music to such an extent that the Seward enthusiasm seemed tumultuous and all-absorbing. Conspicuous among these was the famous prize-fighter Tom Hyer, a sort of white blackbird, who, though prize-fighter and gambler, was an active member of what had begun to be called "the party of moral ideas." He was one of the most quiet and gentlemanly persons in the crowd. The outsiders did the torchlight, brass-band, and Roman-candle business, with oratorical punctuation from hotel balconies, while the delegates proper were engaged in the more quiet and more important work of effecting combinations and making bargains to insure their favorite's success. This part of the programme was largely directed by that consummate politician, Thurlow Weed.

Mr. Greeley was an ill-balanced man. He was great, partly because and partly in spite of his eccentricities. He was, on most occasions, extremely inopportune. In the present conjuncture of circumstances, by the logic of all his political teaching, and his whole life, he should have been for Seward. Seward stood for conscientious conviction, sturdy adherence to principle, and uncompromising hostility to the aggressions of the slave power. *The Tribune* stood for that too, and *The Tribune* was Greeley. The younger reader, and possibly some older ones, may find it difficult to understand, in view of subsequent events, that Seward represented the radical, uncompromising, anti-slavery element in 1860, and that the more conservative, timid, and time-serving of the party chose Mr. Lincoln for the simple reason that it was easier to unite the opposition to Seward on him than on any one else. That is the simple truth. Personal differences with Seward and Weed, growing, strangely enough, out of political ambition, from which he was supposed to be absolutely free, had estranged Greeley from his natural leader. So here he was, fighting him with all the intensity of his nature and all the resources at his command. He was not idle a moment, and, wherever he happened to be, was surrounded by a gaping crowd. Some mischievous fellow pinned a Seward badge on his coat-tail; it amused the crowd for a moment without giving him the slightest disturbance. The Oregon delegation, not being full, his name was put on the list as a delegate from that State. On the same list I may say, in passing, was the name of Eli Thayer, of Massachusetts, another eccentric politician, who, accepting the doctrine of popular sovereignty, had taken practical steps toward beating the slave-holders at their own game, by organizing Emigrant Aid Societies to colonize Kansas with Free-State settlers. He is not much remembered now, but the enterprises he originated saved Kansas from slavery, by filling the Territory with a majority of anti-slavery settlers.

Greeley and Thayer, as delegates from Oregon, raised a smile as the list

was read ; but no serious objection was raised to their sitting in that capacity. There was no disposition to enforce strictness as to credentials from the Northern States, though a question was raised as to the admission of delegates, not well accredited, from Southern States where there was notoriously no Republican organization. It was really a question of Seward and Anti-Seward, as indeed all others were upon which there was any division. The Seward men carried their point, and they were admitted.

Next to Greeley the Blair family—Francis P., Sr., and his two sons, Montgomery and Francis P., Jr.—seemed to attract most attention. The two former were delegates from Maryland, and “Young Frank,” as he was called, led the Missouri delegation. The senior Blair had been an intimate friend and confidential adviser of Andrew Jackson, and there had not been a turn or a twist in national politics for thirty years that he had not been more or less concerned in. Like Thurlow Weed, whom he somewhat resembled in his relations to politics, he had never held public office, but his name was a household word, and here he was held in high honor because of the invaluable service he had rendered in organizing and building up the new party. “Young Frank” had been making so plucky a fight against slavery in the border State of Missouri, for five or six years past, that he had already a national reputation. Montgomery’s distinction at that time was only that he was one of the famous family. The Blairs were all opposed to Seward.

William M. Evarts, then in the prime of life and the full vigor of his physical powers, his smooth-shaven, classical features and strong profile distinguishing him somewhat from the vulgar crowd, was at the head of the New York delegation : the dignity of his carriage and repose of his manner in marked contrast with the fussy and uneasy Greeley, who went shambling around in an aimless, disjointed way. Evarts had not been in public life except in the practice of his profession, but of that he was one of the leading members, and his reputation as a learned lawyer and

brilliant advocate was already national. In the event of Seward’s nomination it was whispered that Evarts would succeed him as Senator. He was the chairman of the delegation—its recognized spokesman and mouthpiece. The management of the Seward canvass was left to others ; he was its figure-head.

Near him sat the deep-eyed, scholarly George W. Curtis, quiet, observant, taking in the whole scene and surroundings with the eye of the philosopher and the serenity of the scholar, but the manner, none the less, of a seer who, in the midst of the turmoil, was profoundly conscious that out of all the hurly-burly the elements were gathering for a stately and orderly forward movement in the history of the Republic and the enfranchisement of universal man. He had been for many years a familiar figure on the lecture platform : a forum which had been increasing in influence and power since 1850, and at that time in all the cities and large towns of the North was more popular than theatre or concert, and more influential than the pulpit upon public opinion. The step from the lecture platform to the political stump in the period opening with the Kansas agitation was, for a man of his profound convictions and sincere character, easy and natural. During the Fremont campaign he had been a leading attraction in the great popular gatherings, and had added to the reputation of a polished and accomplished platform lecturer the fame of a powerful and eloquent political orator. Whatever may have been the motives of other actors on this stage, it was known that he at least was above personal ambition or the reproach of selfish purposes. He seemed indeed but a silent and inactive spectator. He spoke but once, as I remember, and then with greatest brevity ; but in the two minutes he occupied, as will presently appear, he exercised more influence upon results than any of the score or more who addressed the Convention, or all of them combined.

An extremely active person who seemed full of business was skipping round from one delegation to another, particularly among those known as

Anti-Seward, with whom he held frequent whispered consultations. When he sat down for a moment it was at the head of the Indiana delegation. It was Henry S. Lane, Republican candidate for Governor of Indiana. He was very much in earnest, for he said, and kept saying, that with Seward as the candidate Indiana was lost, while Lincoln's nomination would save the State.

In the Massachusetts delegation John A. Andrew sat at the head, almost unknown, but just coming to the front, and now mentioned as the probable candidate for Governor.

Among the Pennsylvanians, next to Wilmot, the man most talked about was Andrew H. Reeder, who had been the first territorial Governor of Kansas, and become famous by his sturdy opposition to the efforts of his party to force slavery into the Territory. He cut no figure, however; was simply pointed out. In the delegation sat Thad Stevens, not much known then outside his State, taking little active part, but indulging in occasional quaint suggestions or sarcastic comment.

In the Ohio delegation were two notable men. Tom Corwin had been in public life forty years, and after being United States Senator had been a member of Mr. Fillmore's cabinet. He had been a familiar figure on the political stump all his life, and always counted one of the best drawing cards of the Old Whig party. He had a swarthy complexion and wore a rather serious expression. But his fame was chiefly as story-teller and humorist. Joshua R. Giddings sat near him. He, too, had been about forty years in public life, but they had been stormy years of hard up-hill fighting against the heaviest odds; years filled with conscientious devotion and self-sacrifice that had brought him only obloquy, abuse, and persecution. The old man was deeply interested in everything that happened, and every word that was spoken, for this Convention seemed to him the fruit of his own labors, the culmination of his long life work. He had waited for it like Simeon for the consolation of Israel, and now that it was at hand he watched it, not with

exultation, but with devout seriousness and a certain sense of personal responsibility for the outcome. The chairman of the Ohio delegation was D. K. Cartter, who was constantly addressing the chair. He was more frequent than fluent; he stuttered. He was afterward appointed to a judgeship in the District of Columbia by President Lincoln, and died in office during President Harrison's term.

Scattered around among the delegations, were some who came into prominence afterward, but were then comparatively unknown beyond their own States. Gideon Welles was chairman of the Connecticut delegation; David Davis and O. H. Browning worked together for Lincoln in the Illinois delegation. Caleb B. Smith sat in the Indiana seats; James F. Wilson and John A. Kasson in those of Iowa, and at the head of the Wisconsin delegation was Carl Schurz, who was the recognized leader of the German voters of the West and Northwest.

The roll of delegates having been read and the preliminary committees having been appointed, the Committee on Permanent Organization reported without delay. George Ashmun, of Massachusetts, was the permanent president. Wilmot appointed Carl Schurz and Preston King, of New York, to escort him to the chair. Ashmun was a handsome man, of dignified presence and winning manners, and an admirable presiding officer. A party of moral ideas could hardly have had a fitter figure-head. In personal appearance he was not unlike Horatio Seymour. He looked the Puritan; as he held the gavel he might have been Speaker of the Long Parliament. In fact he was not Puritanic nor austere. He had been prominent in Massachusetts politics as a Whig; had served in the Legislature and in Congress, and was known as the intimate and confidential friend of Daniel Webster. He had been practically out of politics since 1852. He represented here the Conservative Whigs, who had been holding aloof from the Republicans until now, but had been drawn into the movement by the pressure of events. After his speech on taking the chair, the Con-

vention adjourned till the following day.

The event of the second day was the adoption of the platform. There was some skirmishing over the committee reports, particularly over the rule concerning the number of votes required for a nomination; whether a majority of the delegates present, or a majority of the whole number entitled to vote if all the States were represented. The former course was adopted. These preliminary questions were, as a rule, settled not so much on their merits as on the probable effect upon the Seward and Anti-Seward canvass. In almost every one the Seward men, who were playing their game very cleverly, won. All through the day they were in high spirits, and absolutely confident that the Convention was in their hands. They were playing for pawns; the other fellows let the pawns go, but made every move count for a checkmate. It was tactics against strategy.

I have never seen a National, nor hardly a State Convention, of any party, in which the report of the Committee on Resolutions was not awaited with more or less anxiety and a nervous haste to get it out of the way. There was rather more, than less, of the usual feeling here. Since the Democratic breaking up, the conviction had deepened that this party had the Presidency within reach. The nearness of it made everybody uncommonly fearful of losing it. The consequence was that this body was disposed to be conservative to the point of timidity. All shades of opinion on the slavery question, from the out-and-out Abolitionists like Giddings, to men like Eli Thayer who accepted the popular sovereignty theory, had to be harmonized. There was danger in touching at all the tariff question, and yet it could not be ignored entirely; and most difficult of all was to bring together the representatives of the American or Know-Nothing party and the great mass of foreign-born voters, chiefly Germans, who constituted the strength and the dependence of the party in the Western States. To steer through such dangers and besements called for skilful pilotage.

The Committee had done its work well. It had made it its chief purpose to define, with absolute clearness, the attitude of the party on the issue of the hour, so that by no ingenuity of sophistry could it be held responsible for John Brown or any invasion of State rights, or desire to interfere with slavery in its existing limits. This was made clear. The party stood opposed, not to slavery, but to slavery extension. All other issues were treated as subordinate or unimportant. The reading was interrupted with cheering at some passages. As it ceased there was a pause of a very few seconds. The instinct of a Convention at such moments finds expression in the call for the previous question to shut off debate and all the risks of wrangling. Carter, of Ohio, was on his feet in an instant, and moved it with a stutter. But it's a dangerous thing to undertake if it has the appearance of choking anybody off who is of consequence. Mr. Giddings was not entirely satisfied with the report—had an amendment to offer. He appealed to his colleague with great solemnity to withdraw the call, to which Carter answered, somewhat curtly: "I did it to cut you off and all other amendments and all discussion." The Convention was not with him; by an overwhelming majority the previous question was voted down. It was but a short triumph for Giddings, however. His amendment, which was simply a reassertion of the "self-evident truths" of the Declaration of Independence, tucked in after the first resolution, was voted down in spite of the old man's almost tearful appeal. It was in the first platform of the party, he said; the party had grown up on that idea, and to leave it out would be cowardly abandonment of first principles. But the Convention shied at it. It might be construed as taking ground against slavery *per se*, when the purpose was only to oppose its extension. It would lose votes. Down it went.

And then—think of it—this old man, who had devoted almost his whole life to the fight against slavery, with never, up to the birth of this party, the slightest hope of doing anything except talk in a vague, scolding way against it, rose

up and started for the door, because his whim had been disregarded. His amendment—afterward adopted—made no difference, and his going out would have made none; but that, with what followed, constituted the dramatic episode of the day, and is so remembered. I shall take leave to say that the Giddings part of it was childish, and that the Convention itself was truly great when, a little later, it humored his weakness, and with a tender consideration for his years of faithful service and conscientious devotion to principle, not often seen in such bodies, retraced its steps. The old man was stopped by the New York delegation on his way out, and assured that another effort would be made to save the Declaration of Independence for him, but he went out inconsolable. Like other Abolition leaders who had been all their lives bombarding slavery at long range with artillery that was only noisy and never effective, he mistook this movement for a reinforcement, when it was really independent, elemental, seismic; a new force; original, spontaneous, reinforcing nothing, but gathering in its wake whatever was akin in sympathy or aim. The report being open for debate by the defeat of the previous question, two or three attempts to amend were made, and more or less eloquence was expended in discussing them. But with a general notion that the work of the Committee could not be improved, all were voted down, until George W. Curtis rose and offered anew the Giddings amendment. The report had been safely steered through all difficulties and left intact, and there was less disposition than ever to amend it, for the discussion had lasted all day and people were tired. There was a murmur of disapprobation, and the point of order was raised that the amendment had once been voted down, which the chair at first sustained. Upon the explanation, which was really only an evasion, that the amendment was now offered to the second, instead of the first, clause of the resolutions, it was pronounced in order. Then Curtis made a speech of about three minutes. Not a word was wasted. There was such earnestness in his manner,

such pathos of entreaty in his tone, that the audience stretched out and listened to him as it had listened to no one before. When he said, "I have to ask this Convention whether they are prepared to go upon the record and before the country as voting down the words of the Declaration of Independence?" cries of "No, no," came from all over the house. "I rise," he said in closing, "simply to ask gentlemen to think well before, upon the free prairies of the West, in the summer of 1860, they dare to wince and quail before the assertions of the men in Philadelphia, in 1776—before they dare to shrink from repeating the words that these great men enunciated." The Convention went off its feet. Without another word the amendment was adopted, with hardly a dissenting voice, amid applause that shook the Wigwam.

This brief speech of Curtis's was, next to the nominations themselves, the feature of the proceedings around which most interest centred; it was high-water mark. As to the effect of it, I suppose it was simply to shake up and put courage into men who were beginning to walk pussy-footed and shy at shadows. "Well, Curtis," said Evarts, afterward, with a twinkle in his eyes, when speaking of Seward's defeat, "at least we saved the Declaration of Independence."

The resolutions went through by acclamation about six o'clock in the afternoon, and amid whirlwinds of noise that exceeded all previous demonstrations, the Convention adjourned till next day. There was not much sleep for anybody that night. The streets were alive all night with processions and brass bands, while the delegation head-quarters at the hotels had oratory on tap and were in constant eruption. The real business was going on, however, without noise or demonstration. It was the commerce between Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania that night that made Mr. Lincoln President, and put Caleb B. Smith and Simon Cameron in his Cabinet. In these negotiations Mr. Greeley was not consulted. Edward Bates was his candidate, but "Anybody to beat Seward," his motto. The deal made by David Davis and N.

B. Judd with Pennsylvania and Ohio was not suspected by the Seward men, who were in high feather over the admission of delegates from Virginia and Texas, and at the opening of the third day's session more confident than ever. Impressed by their confidence Greeley had given up the fight, and wired *The Tribune* that Seward's nomination was certain. And that indeed was the belief of everybody except a few persons who had been up all night at the Tremont House, without any brass bands.

"We entreat Thee," said the clergyman in his opening prayer, "that at some future but no distant day the evil which now invests the body politic shall not only have been arrested in its progress, but wholly eradicated from the system. And may the pen of the historian trace an intimate connection between that glorious consummation and the transactions of this Convention." Prayer and prophecy!

There were few preliminaries. The Convention was impatient of suspense. The vast Wigwam was crowded to the last inch of its capacity, and the streets on all sides were packed with people, who stood through the balloting awaiting the result with intense expectancy. There had been, up to that time, in point of mere numbers, no such assembly of men on the continent. Looked at from the stage, the shimmer of its gay decorations and the flutter of its constant movement dazzled the vision, while the confused and inarticulate buzz of voices and hum of conversation bewildered the sense. It was not easy to untangle one's self from it sufficiently to get the scene in perspective.

The candidates were put in nomination, and at mention of each name applause more or less loud and prolonged broke forth. The great demonstrations were at the names of Seward and Lincoln. When either of these was mentioned the audience seemed to go wild. One might have supposed that the choice between them was to be governed by volume of sound. In these lung contests the Lincoln men had the advantage of his being the local favorite, and having, consequently, a more numerous claque. But the Seward

men were good howlers, and the match was not far from equal.

The formal placing of candidates in nomination being over, the roll-call began with Maine, proceeding in geographical instead of alphabetical order. The vote of the New England States was anxiously watched. The Seward men counted on some solid delegations and a majority of the total vote. Maine started off with 10 for Seward and 6 for Lincoln; New Hampshire gave Seward but 1 and Lincoln 7; Vermont gave her 10 votes to Collamer. With each vote the countenances of the Seward men fell and the hopes of the Lincoln men rose. The votes of the three States had been simply turned in by the several chairmen in an undemonstrative matter-of-fact way. Massachusetts was called. John A. Andrew was chairman of the delegation. In his view Massachusetts was something more than a numeral in a mathematical process, or a platoon in a procession. He understood dramatic effect too well to stand up and simply hand in a few figures. He did not address the Secretary. He stood on his chair, said, "Mr. President," and waited till Ashmun said, "The gentleman from Massachusetts." The Old Bay State having got wheeling distance and distinct audience, he said, "Mr. President, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts casts 21 votes for William H. Seward and 4 votes for Abraham Lincoln." The cheers that followed were more for the dignified presence and impressive manner of the man than for either of the candidates, and all joined in it. The vote was slightly disappointing to the Seward men, who hoped for the solid delegation. Then came Connecticut and Rhode Island, and the reporters' pencils swiftly made the New England footing, which showed that out of 81 votes Seward had but 32, while Lincoln had 19, and all others 30.

The Secretary called New York. Only one delegation had cast a solid vote, and Vermont's vote for Collamer was known to be merely complimentary. Everybody knew what New York's vote would be; but Evarts had no less appreciation of dramatic effect than John A. Andrew. He too

stood on his chair, and looking beyond the Secretary said: "Mr. President." "The gentleman from New York," said Ashmun. There was stillness, but not absolute silence. "Mr. President," said Evarts, slowly, "I wait until the Convention is in order." A few strokes of the gavel and there was a hush undisturbed by a whisper. Every eye was fixed on Evarts, every head bent toward him. Again Ashmun: "The gentleman from New York has the floor." Then Evarts, with slow, deliberate utterance that gave each word the weight of a great argument: "Mr. President, the State of New York casts 70 votes for William Henry Seward." Straight went the audience off its feet and for several minutes there was wild applause.

Then New Jersey gave a solid vote for William L. Dayton; Pennsylvania hers, nearly solid, for Cameron, and presently Virginia astonished the Seward men by giving 14 votes for Lincoln and only 8 for Seward. Ohio gave Chase three-quarters of her vote, and then Indiana gave the Seward men another surprise by a solid vote for Lincoln. Missouri was solid for Bates. The first glimmer of comfort the Seward men had had for some time came when Michigan gave him her 12 votes. Their cheering was drowned when the next State was called, and Illinois added 22 to the Lincoln column. As the list tailed off, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, and Kansas voted solidly for Seward, and the hopes of his friends revived. The count showed 465 votes, with Seward and Lincoln leading; the former having 173½, the latter 102, and the rest divided between ten candidates. It was settled that either Seward or Lincoln would be nominated. The question for the Seward men was whether they could detach the 60 votes they needed from the opposing candidates before the latter could combine.

Everybody watched with intensest interest the changes on the second ballot. Vermont led off with the transfer of her solid vote to Lincoln, to the great disappointment of the New Yorkers, and when the six New England States had been called, Lincoln was found to be leading with 36 to

Seward's 33. Presently Pennsylvania carried out the arrangement made the night before, and put 48 votes to the Lincoln column. A gain of a vote or two here and there helped swell the total, so that in the summing up Lincoln was only 3½ votes behind Seward, who lacked 49 of a majority. The pencils that ran swiftly up and down the columns could not find that 49 so easily as they could 52 for Lincoln out of Ohio's 29 for Chase, Missouri's 18 for Bates, and New Jersey's 10 for Dayton. To the experienced observer it was now only a question of one more ballot, or two.

While the third ballot was in progress there was a great deal of hurrying back and forth, swift consultations, pulling and hauling, and hubbub generally. But the demonstrations were not so noisy, loud, and prolonged as in the earlier stages of the proceedings. The excitement was too intense, the nervous strain too severe, to relieve itself in noise. The break in New England continued, Lincoln having now 42 to Seward's 31. There was no change of blocks of votes on this call, but a gradual crumbling away of support from the scattering candidates and a drawing toward Lincoln. Seward was ahead once, when New York with 70 blotted out the Lincoln lead of 11 in New England, but the next moment Pennsylvania plumped 52 for Lincoln, and presently the Western States pushed him far to the front, a sure winner.

The experienced press correspondents and reporters on the stage had from the beginning of this ballot confined themselves to the tally of a single column, the totals of which they kept in hand as the call went on. The last call—the District of Columbia—had hardly been answered, when from half-a-dozen seats came the report, "Lincoln 231½; he lacks a vote and a half." Ohio had still a reserve of 15 votes that had been given to Chase, and Missouri 18 that had gone for Bates. In an instant there was a scramble to get in on the winner. The stuttering Cartter was ahead. As soon as he could be heard, he changed four votes from Chase to Lincoln. Everybody was on his feet

and everybody apparently shrieking a change of votes, none of which, except Ohio's, was ever recorded. Everybody? No, not everybody. In the New York seats everybody sat dumb. Michigan made no stir, and only a part of the Massachusetts delegation contributed to the din—oases of silence in a Sahara of sound.

I thought I had heard noise and seen wild excitement before, but this was the grand climacteric. On the platform near me Henry S. Lane was executing a war-dance with some other dignified delegate as partner; the Indiana men generally were smashing hats and hugging each other; the Illinois men did everything except stand on their heads; hands were flying wildly in the air, everybody's mouth was open, and bedlam seemed loose. The din of it was terrific. Seen from the stage it seemed to be twenty thousand mouths in full blast, as if that startling figure of *La Guerre* on the *Arc de Triomphe* had been kindled into life and, repeated twenty thousand-fold, poured out upon this arena. I have seen conventions carried off their feet before and since, but never anything like that. I was so overcome with the spectacle that the contagion of it took no hold. I could not shout, I simply caught my breath and stared at it. It seemed as if it never would stop. Over the desk of the reading clerk was a skylight, and men stationed there had reported to the packed masses in the streets from the edge of the roof the results of the balloting. On the roof there was also a loaded cannon ready to convey the news when the nomination was reached. The four Ohio changes had hardly been recorded when it belched its fire. The

cry, "Lincoln is nominated," went over the roof into the streets and the streets went wild. So, when the inside tempest lulled an instant, the roar from the outside came in like an echo and the storm was renewed; the waves of noise rolled back and forth till from sheer weariness the shouters sank into their seats.

There was something almost painful in the stillness which fell, when the chairman at this point recalled order with a stroke of the gavel, and looking to the New York delegation, where all eyes followed him, said: "The gentleman from New York." In a few well chosen words, listened to with profoundest attention, Mr. Evarts, on behalf of the New York delegation, accepted the result and moved that the nomination be made unanimous. It was seconded by John A. Andrew, Carl Schurz, and Austin Blair, of Michigan, in speeches that contained more sadness than exultation, and was passed, to be followed by another tumultuous outbreak.

So Abraham Lincoln was nominated, and Christendom, without knowing it, had entered behind the curtain of a new epoch and into the dawning of a new day. The unconscious instruments of a Higher Power, little as they knew of the grandeur of the opportunity they had opened, knew less of the greatness of the man to whose hand they had linked it. They had nominated the plain, every-day, story-telling, mirth-provoking Lincoln of the hustings: the husk only of the Lincoln of history. It took four fearful years to give the event its true relations and right proportions, and it was not until the veil was drawn by an assassin's hand that the real Lincoln was revealed.